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Art Education Laboratory

Saturday Classes

A Minimum Art Budget Programme

Joan Rankin

1968 -69

Report
Saturday Art Classes
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Instructor: Joan Rankin
Assistant: Natalia Douglas

Saturday Morning Children's Art Class
Age Group - 7,8,9 year olds

The theme of this year's art program with the children in this particular age group was to develop an art program which would go beyond the normal art materials found in the average classroom. Every community, large or small, has many sources which can provide what may be considered free art materials. These are usually what might be considered scrap material which is disposed of as waste by industry, warehouses or retail outlets. There are several main reasons why this area was chosen for research and considered important to a good art program.

The first of these although not the most important or significant, deals with the budget aspect of the art program. Most art budgets are far too small. In many cases no funds are available for art materials at all, and in such cases, of the ideas for material sources presented here, many may make possible some art experiences.

Even the best equipped art department can add depth to their programm by utilizing scrap. One caution should however be observed in all the above situations. Administration should not be encouraged to believe that an art program can exist completely by utilizing "free" scrap material and that therefore monies which would normally be alloted to art can be used elsewhere. Scrap material should be thought of as a means to enrich the art program, to add depth to the present experiences with the more traditional media found in art rooms.

Secondly the scrap material projects can broaden the childs awareness of the world around him. It stimulates him to find new uses for materials which

may have long been familiar to him as serving another function. It may in many cases stimulate his imagination in a way that paint or pencil never could. It can make art a more alive vital experience.

Scrap material art brings the child closer to the contemporary art world of the artist, with his found art, his collages and his environments. It is very important to open up the boundaries of art for children to force them to question what constitutes an art medium. The modern art is even questioning what art is or whether if in fact it is at all any more and we are witnessing such forms as non-art, earth art and many others.

It should be noted that this type of program does entail a lot of work on the part of the teacher in its organization. Research is necessary to discover what kinds of industries are there, what warehouses and retail outlets, and what do they discard. Then imagination is needed to conceive of possible ways these products could be utilized in the art program.

Sources in the community can be contacted by phoning, but often it will be necessary and more satisfactory to visit these places in order to select what will be of most value for art projects. For example, when contacting textile or clothing manufacturers, it would be more useful if they could supply bright and textured scraps rather than just smooth colorless scraps. Often such suggestions will save the teacher being loaded with materials she really cannot use. Although only scrap material has been mentioned, the possibility of samples and damaged goods should be investigated.

Sometimes it is important that the project idea comes first. It is not always possible to start with the quantities of scrap you have collected and find ways to use it. Certain projects which you want to do with a class will demand

particular materials to carry them out and in this case you must find some material which will fill these needs.

The following list may suggest sources of material for almost any art program. Also the yellow pages of the telephone directory will be helpful.

1. Factories: clothing, textile, knitting mills, trimming, lace, drapery, upholstery, carpeting, lamp shades, linolium, packaging, packing and insulating, paper cups, laminated papers and tapes, plastics, copper and other metals, ceramics and many more.
2. Retail stores: sample books (drapery, upholstery, floor coverings, wall paper, clothing), assorted boxes (drugs), bottle caps, paper mache egg and fruit forms, onion bags, potatoe sacks, etc.
3. Cafeterias: tin cans and pails (all sizes), glass jars.
4. Electrical shops: scrap wire from instulations, radio and T.V. tubes, etc.
5. Plumbing shops: bits of tin, pipe, etc.
6. Sash and Door or other carpentry shops: sawdust, scraps of lumber and samples of woods, screening.

The program which experimented with the ideas outline above was carried out with twelve children ages 7 to 9 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 Saturday mornings. The principal projects were usually planned to extend over two or three Saturday sessions.

Only the main projects utilizing scrap materials will be described. Short, one week art programs were planned between these utilizing mainly more traditional materials such as crayons or tempera paints for picture making.

Topic I : Treasures

Motivation - talked about and looked at several objects the teacher brought to class - a mauve colored smooth shiny stone and several small pieces of drift

wood. These the teacher called her treasures - discussed what a treasure is - what qualities make an object a treasure - what were some things they would like to have as treasures. Each child was asked to find a treasure to bring to class and show. The following projects developed.

Project A:

The first morning the children were invited to go for a treasure hunt on paper. Long sheets of white wrapping paper which made a continuous path around the room and large colored chalks were used. Each child drew an imaginary path of straight, curved, wiggly, twisty lines and wherever they wished to have a treasure found they stopped the path and drew the objects they wished to find. At the conclusion the teachers were taken for a walk along each childs treasure hunt.

This turned out to be a wonderful introduction to the art classes for these young children who came not knowing whether they really wanted to be there or not. The novelty of the experience, the challenge to their imaginations served to relax their tensions and helped them to become acquainted.

Project B:

The following week the class began with looking at the treasures which the children brought. We decided it would be fun to make our own treasures - small treasures we could hold in our hands.

Materials: buttons, sequins, bits of bright fabric and trimmings, beads, wire, foam rubber, toilet paper rolls, paper cups (variety of shapes, glue, thread and needle.

The resulting treasures were exquisite and the children were thrilled with them and were anxious to show them to their parents. (see slides)

Project C:

Since we had made treasures which were small and could be held in ones hand we decided next to make a treasure which was bigger than us (the children) and we could go into - a treasure house. The children worked in pairs. This was a difficult experience at first since they did not know how to share a creative experience with someone they knew only slightly. At first there was clashing of ideas and dominance of some personalities but gradually they began to share jobs and ideas and each one began to stimulate creative ideas in the other. The projects took two weeks.

Materials: large cardboard cartons in which doors and windows were cut, extra cardboard provided chimnies when required. The boxes were decorated with fabrics, laminated papers, streamers, paper rolls, trims colored cellophane, egg and fruit crates, beads, paper tapes (colored). Bond fast, masking tape and staples were used to adhere decorations. Colored chalks added details. (see slides)

Topic II: Marionettes

This project was chosen as a pre-Christmas activity which would utilize scrap material and provide an object of a festive nature which could be played with. A partially constructed marionette was shown to the children with an explanation of how it was done. We discussed how it could be completed, what kind of creatures they could make and what materials they might want to use.

Materials: popsicle sticks, corks, balso wood, styro foam, floral wire, thread. The marionettes were completed with tempera paint, felt pens, cloth, bits of fur and leather, sequins and buttons, trimmings.

When the marionettes were completed a stage backdrop was drawn on white wrapping paper with felt pens. A stage was improvised on a large box table. The

children took turns making their marionette perform. They created people, birds, animals, insects, robots, space men during this two week project. Each marionette was strung up to a hand control with string so that arms and legs could be manipulated freely. (see slides)

Topic III: Sound Exploration and Musical Instruments

The class began with a discussion of sounds loud and soft. They listened to taped sound, then created some of their own. A number or oriental instruments were shown and they made sound with them and talked about them. Then we decided to make our own instruments.

Materials: tin cans of all sizes including lard pails, paper cups assorted sizes and shapes, drawing paper (for drum tops), metal filings, stones, buttons, bottle caps, nails and screws, broken pottery, sticks, elastic bands, foil plates, sunflower seeds, paper tubes, and rolls, lids to glass jars, wire, shower hooks. The instruments were decorated with colored paper and tempera paints.

When the instruments were completed each child recorded his sounds on tape. Many distinguished between loud sound and quiet sound in the instruments they made. For a finale they all played together. The playback was a great thrill and they wanted to hear it over and over. The parents enjoyed it too. (hear tape attached)

Topic IV: Marine life

Although this project does not utilize scrap materials it has been included because it makes use of local resources in another way.

The class began with a discussion of the sea. Pictures, photographs, art reproductions dealing with marine life were shown. Then a display was set up on the floor of fish, snails (live), crabs, shells and sea weed which had been

obtained from a local fish market. The children examined the objects carefully, discussed them, and then made their own drawings about marine life.

Materials: wax crayons with tempera paint washes on drawing paper. (see slides)

Topic V: Outer Space Mobile

The session began with a discussion of what a mobile is - a sculpture that moves in space. When we thought of space we thought of space travel - and objects which might be found in space. We thought of things which we could make and put on the mobile so they would move in space. Two large mobiles were constructed, each child contributing several objects to be part of it. Some of the children helped balance the mobile and decide where the various objects should go.

Materials: wire, thread, variety of wood (popsicle sticks, balsa), papers, plastic shapes and containers, egg crates, paper cylinders, foil, foam, paper cups, corks, masking tape, bond fast, twine. (see slides)

Topic VI: Hand Puppets

Papier mache is a good medium for young children. Since they enjoyed the marionette experience so much we decided on hand puppets as a good subject for papier mache. The children were shown a commercially made hand puppet and ways we could make one were discussed. Then the making of a papier mache head was demonstrated. Crushed news paper was stuffed into a small paper bag. Half a toilet paper roll was used as the neck, the opening of the bag being fastened to it with masking tape. Then strips of newspaper dipped in wall paper paste built up the shape of head and features. We felt our faces to see what the shapes were like. The children thought about the kind of character they wanted to make and then started to work. The heads were placed over pop bottles so both

hands were free to model.

The following Saturday the dried heads were painted and decorated and the costume made. Each child sewed up his own costume and decorated it with trim, leather, fur, buttons. Paws or hands were cut from leather or velveteen and stapled on. The costume was fastened to the neck with wire.

The puppets included an elephant, a cat, grandfather, clown, etc. Each had a distinct personality. The following Saturday a stage was constructed and a puppet show given.

Topic VII: Box sculpture creatures

Boxes of all shapes and sizes make wonderful motivation for a third-dimentional project. In this case we chose imaginary animals as a topic. This was the last session and parents attended and took part in the class with the children. We discussed briefly the possibilities the boxes suggested and all went eagerly to work. The resulting creatures were fantastic and parents were thrilled and suggested there should be a class where they could do this sort of thing.

Materials: wide assortment of boxes, mostly small, assorted paper, tubes, cones, egg crates, and any materials left from other projects done during the year (fabrics and trims excluded) bond fast, masking tape, staples, paper tapes used to construct.